

MINUTES OF THE NEBRASKA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

MARCH 25, 1999

Those in attendance were:

Wayne Davis, Chair	Paul Rohrbaugh
Roy Stewart, Member	Dick Sklenar
Frank Bartak, Member	Paul Rohrbaugh
Dale Watermeier, Member	Doug Garrison
Vince Kramper, Member	Dayle Williamson, Director
Joseph Hergott, Member	Jim Cook, Staff
Richard Jiskra, Member	Tom Pesek, Staff
Jim VanMarter, Member	Josh Lear, Staff
Roger Korell, Member	Maggie Smith, Staff
Wayne Madsen, Member	Mahendra Bansal, Staff
Dick Mercer, Member	Steve Gaul, Staff
Bob Hahn, Member	Steve Rathje, Staff
LeRoy Pieper, Member	Gayle Starr, Staff
Paul Zillig	

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. in Conference Room A in the Lower Level of the Nebraska State Office Building in Lincoln, Nebraska, by Commission Chair, Wayne Davis.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of the meeting was placed in the LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR on March 17, 1999, notifying the public of the meeting.

INTRODUCTIONS

Wayne Davis introduced new Commission members Jim Van Marter, Roger Korell, and Wayne Madsen.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIAL

The following items of informational material were distributed during the course of the meeting and a copy of each is attached to the file copy of the minutes.

1. Natural Resources Conservation Service Report to the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission and Nebraska Association of Resources Districts, March, 1999.
2. Soil & Water Conservation Fund Report.
3. Nebraska Resources Development Fund Present Financial Status Report.
4. Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund, Status of Fund Report.
5. Natural Resources Enhancement Fund Distribution.

6. Minutes of the Program Committee Meeting.
7. Minutes of the Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting.
8. Minutes of the Legislative & Budget Committee Meeting.
9. Memo to Commission members from Director on Recommendation on the Gering Canal Phase III Project.
10. Information from Nemaha NRD on Appraisal #98-26; Middle Big Nemaha Site #12, Johnson County, NE.
11. Republican Basin Water Meter Program information.
12. United National AFO Strategy Executive Summary.
13. USDA - The Conservation Reserve Program - 18th Signup & News Release.
14. Summary of HR 728 "The Small Watershed Rehabilitation Amendment of 1999".
15. Draft State Emergency Board information on rangeland fires.
16. Aging Watershed Projects: A Growing National Concern".
17. NRC Data Bank Information on County Population Estimates and Partial Users List of Requested DEMs/DOQQs Data.

MINUTES

Motion was made by Kramper and seconded by Jiskra to approve the minutes of the January 29, 1999, Commission meeting as distributed. Motion carried.

Aye: Stewart, Hahn, Hergott, Jiskra, Watermeier, Mercer, Pieper, Bartak, Kramper, Korell, Madsen, Van Marter, Davis

Nay: None

Not Present: Roberts, Donaldson, Larson

EXPENDITURES

Motion was made by Kramper and seconded by Pieper to approve the expenditure report for January and February 1999, as distributed Motion carried.

Aye: Hahn, Hergott, Jiskra, Watermeier, Mercer, Pieper, Bartak, Kramper, Korell, Madsen, Van Marter, Stewart, Davis

Nay: None

Not Present: Roberts, Donaldson, Larson

RESOLUTIONS

Commission Chair Wayne Davis explained that resolutions recognizing the service of four outgoing Commission members (Glen Kroese, Ron Nelson, Mike Shaughnessy, Clifford Welsh) had been prepared for Commission action.

Motion was made by Bartak and seconded by Mercer to approve the four resolutions. Motion carried.

Aye: Hergott, Jiskra, Watermeier, Mercer, Pieper, Bartak, Kramper, Korell, Madsen, Van Marter, Stewart, Hahn, Davis

Nay: None

Not Present: Donaldson, Larson, Roberts

ADVISOR'S COMMENTS

Steve Chick, representing the Natural Resources Conservation Service, commented on NRCS assistance to landowners affected by the recent fire in the sandhills, their work on animal feeding operations, the current federal legislation being proposed to assist with maintenance and rehabilitation of aging watershed structures, and the NRCS budget. Chick then introduced NRCS employee, Doug Garrison, who made a power point presentation on the sandhills fire.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dayle Williamson commented on some recent activities involving NRCS, NACD, and the National Association of State

Conservation Agencies. He explained that some issues had recently caused some strained relations between the organizations but that efforts were being made to come to a better understanding. He also commented briefly on federal budget activity as it concerns NRCS and NRCS programs.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

Dick Mercer stated that the Environmental Trust Board would be meeting on April 6 to have a public hearing on the preliminary awards of Environmental Trust Funds.

PLATTE AND REPUBLICAN RIVER ACTIVITIES

Jim Cook commented on recent activities of the Governance Committee and indicated that the various groups working on activities related to the Platte River Cooperative Agreement were making progress on their portions of the effort.

He added that the courts have granted Nebraska an additional 30 days to respond to the issues raised by the State of Kansas in their lawsuit concerning the Republican River.

NACD CONVENTION

Vince Kramper showed some slides of the recent NACD convention in San Diego and commented on convention activities. Dale Watermeier and Dayle Williamson also briefly commented on activities at the NACD convention.

NARD WASHINGTON TRIP

Frank Bartak, Dale Watermeier, Wayne Davis, and Gayle Starr each commented on activities and issues raised during the NARD Washington trip.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Robert Hahn reported that the committee had been briefed on a number of Comprehensive Planning and Data Bank activities, including the completion of the DEM/DOQ project publishing the soil interpretive mapping units on the internet, the Platte River Cooperative Hydrology Study, the Cooperative Nitrate Study with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Lower Platte River and Tributaries Feasibility Study. He added that Steve Gaul had also made a presentation to the committee on the history of water planning in Nebraska.

LEGISLATIVE & BUDGET COMMITTEE

Richard Mercer reported that the committee had first reviewed the status of budget considerations by the Appropriations Committee as well as the Governor's budget recommendations. He added that the recommendations of both the Governor and the Appropriations Committee is to continue funding for the Commission's several funds at the same level as the current year with the exception of the Water Well Decommissioning Fund where LB 92 will create a source of funds for the Water Well Decommissioning Fund by directing the \$30.00 well registration fee to that fund. He added that it is uncertain at this time whether there will be some general funds appropriated to that fund as well.

Mercer indicated that the committee had also discussed LB 639 which would merge the Commission with other state natural resources agencies. He added that an interim study of that issue will likely take place.

Mercer stated the committee had also been briefed on efforts to replace funds to be lost by NRDs because of changes in motor vehicle tax distributions and the potential loss of the Natural Resources Enhancement Fund. He further explained that several bills affecting the Environmental Trust Natural Resources Districts and state water law would likely be held over for interim study by legislative committees. Mercer added that no recommendations were being made by the committee to change any positions previously established by the Commission on this year's legislation.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

LeRoy Pieper indicated that the committee had been briefed by Tom Pesek on the status of the Resources Development Fund and the Small Watersheds and Flood Control Fund. He noted the committee had discussed the pending federal reauthorization of the Lower Wood River/Upper Warm Slough Project.

Pieper noted that Paul Rohrbaugh, Manager of the Nemaha NRD, had reviewed their request for the use of Small Watersheds Flood Control Funds on two properties in the Middle Big Nemaha Watershed. Motion was made by Pieper and seconded by Watermeier to approve the appraisal on (1) the Curt Wischmeier tract (53.5 acres) and commit 50% of \$34,720 or \$17,360 for easement; and (2) the Junior and Vicky Little tract (26.2 acres) and commit 50% Of \$13,094 or \$6,547 for easement, both tracts at Site 12 of the Middle Big Nemaha Watershed Project. Motion carried.

Aye: Jiskra, Watermeier, Mercer, Pieper, Bartak, Kramper, Korrell, Madsen, Van Marter, Stewart, Hahn, Hergott, Davis

Nay: None

Not Present: Donaldson, Larson, Roberts

Pieper added that Gayle Starr had briefed the committee on the status of the Soil and Water Conservation Fund and the Republican Water Meter Program.

Governor Johanns commented briefly and stressed his support for the Natural Resources District program in Nebraska and the support the State of Nebraska needs to provide. He also thanked the Commission members for their volunteer work and the knowledge they brought into the process.

PRESENTATION ON DOQS

Josh Lear presented a brief summary of the USGS/NRC Workshare Agreement for DEMs and DOQs. The summary included some of the uses to which NRC is putting the data; floodplain delineation and SSURGO, and a list of uses by others. Also discussed was access to the data via the web.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Commission will be May 5 & 6 in the Lower Platte South NRD conference room, 3125 Portia Street in Lincoln.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:20 p.m.